

## Colonel Muggs And His Luck

By Donald Allen

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Colonel Muggs, U. S. A., was primarily to blame for his capture by Greek brigands. He was pompous and portly. He wrote his name in big letters on hotel registers and talked about his mines and ranches. When he reached Corinth he strutted a little more than usual. He found there an English lord, and, wanting to show him that he wasn't the only prominent personage about, he cut a swath as wide as he could. Unknown to him there was an article in a Greek paper about him. He was said to be worth \$50,000,000 and piling up millions more, and that he talked of buying up all the ruins in Greece and shipping them to New York as a free gift to the city.

His true Greek brigand takes the daily newspaper and pays special attention to the society column. It was on account of that newspaper article that Colonel Muggs was taken in. He hired a carriage and driver and guide and two flunkies and drove out into the country from Corinth to "do" some interesting ruins, but before he was half finished sight seeing he found that the brigands had "done" him.

The colonel had made his arrangements overnight, and this given his guide time to send word to the gang. There were five of them, and every man knew his business. They came upon the colonel while he was eating his lunch on a mass of masonry many thousand years old. It was so old that the brigands should have felt awe, but they didn't.

As soon as they had made the colonel understand that he was at their mercy they turned to and ate up the rest of his luncheon and wanted to punch his head because he hadn't left more. When they had finished eating and drinking they set out for the mountains.

The colonel exhibited a reluctance to go with them, but they caused a change of heart by pricking him with the points of their knives. One of them could speak English fairly well, and he explained that, while it was the intention to treat the captive with due consideration until he had yielded up the money, they couldn't permit anything bordering on the frolicsome in his conduct.

"Say, now, but who do you fellows take me for?" demanded the American, as he was being hustled along.

"We have made no mistake," was the reply. "You are the man worth \$50,000,000."

"Fifty million nothings! Where did you get hold of any such rot?"

"In the newspapers. You shall see them when we get to camp."

"Well, you are a lot of fools. I have been swelling around some, and have perhaps given a false impression, but it's all being done on check. I'll tell you straight that I'm from Meriden, Conn., U. S. A. I'm no colonel, though I hate to admit it to a blamed gang of robbers. I'm simply Joseph J. Muggs, traveling salesman for a clock factory. I am over here to introduce eight day clocks, and I have hardly money enough to pay my hotel bill and get out of town. If you've got hold of me thinking to raise a stake, you are going to get left."

"We shall see," replied the leader, while the smile on his face showed that he thought the colonel was trying to work off old stock on him.

After a five hour tramp they reached headquarters in the bill. Headquarters was a dilapidated hut and a campfire in a lonely spot. Some black bread and roasted goat's flesh constituted supper, and later on the brigands sat in a circle around their captive, and the leader said:

"You shall have the freedom of the camp as long as you are with us, but some one will have an eye on you all the time. The first move you make to escape will bring a bullet. In the morning you may write a letter to your banker, and it will be sent to the town by messenger."

"What in the devil shall I write to my banker about?" demanded the colonel, who was tired and disgusted.

"That he shall send us a sum equal to what you would call \$500,000 in your American money as your ransom."

"Jupiter Jewkiss, but are you crazy! Have the whole five of you just escaped from some lunatic asylum? If you want any further chat with me tonight, then don't talk through the top of your hat."

"You will write in the morning," said the leader, while the others muttered under their breath.

"But I have no banker in Corinth."

"Then to the American consul. He will help you to get the ransom money from America. He will use the cable, and in three days it will be here and you will be free."

"Say, old man," remarked the colonel after a hearty laugh, "this will be one on me when I get back to Meriden. You seem to have got the idea that there are millions in the clock business. Let me tell you that if we show a 4 per cent clean profit a year we are tickled to death. My bank balance in the First National of Meriden is about \$7."

"The papers say that you are worth \$50,000,000."

"The papers are hanged! If you run this brigand business by what the papers say you'll die in the poorhouse."

"That you are to buy up all the ruins of our country," persisted the leader.

"Yes, when hens climb trees. I couldn't buy one old broken column. Just make up your mind that you're not hold of the wrong man. It's that

English lord you want to lay hands on. I've been putting on side, but it's all froth."

The colonel was ordered into the hut to pass the night, and the brigands went into caucus. They believed the American to be lying. Once they had captured a wealthy Frenchman who had fled them out of a big ransom, and they didn't mean to be caught again.

When morning came there was another slim breakfast. Then the leader said:

"If you wish to be free in two days, then write to your bank in Corinth."

"But I told you I had none," replied the colonel.

"Then to your country's consul."

"He could be of no use whatever."

"Listen to me," said the man as his comrades fingered their knives menacingly. "We give you one week in which to raise the ransom. After that you are a dead man. Don't trifle with us. You cannot deceive us, and you cannot hope for a rescue."

"Well, all I've got to say is that if you fellows tried to do business on your plan in Meriden you'd go stone broke in two weeks. I've told you the truth, and if you are too thick headed to absorb it it's your misfortune."

The brigands were in no hurry. Neither were they in any danger of being overhauled. They divided their ransom money with the it, and the it saw that they were not interfered with.

Nothing further was said to the colonel for two days. He made himself believe that he was out on a huckleberry excursion and tried to enjoy it. On the third day he noticed that the brigands began to exhibit signs of impatience and feel the edges of their knives. On the morning of the fifth writing materials were placed before him, and the leader said:

"Perhaps you will write to your banker today?"

"With the greatest pleasure, if you will only tell me who he is."

"Oh, very well. There are two days left to you."

Colonel Muggs hadn't been taking things as easy as appeared. He was in a hole and couldn't see his way out. He couldn't raise \$200 just then to save his life, and he realized that he had put himself into a false position and that the brigands would hold him to it. For four days he had had an eye out for any chance to make a break, but he had been under strict watch.

Soon after noon on that fifth day a big thunder cloud came sweeping up from the south and brought a torrent of rain and terrific thunder and lightning. Every one crowded into the hut for shelter, and the brigands were cursing and praying alternately when something occurred big enough to make a sensation in America for a few minutes. What it was the colonel didn't know until half an hour later, when he woke up. Then he found himself and the brigands lying in the midst of the ruins of the old hut. His fellow lodgers seemed very quiet, and he decided not to disturb them. He gathered up their knives and carbines, and, retaining one of the latter, he chuckled the rest into a ravine and then set out for Corinth. If the brigands woke up after he departed they did not pursue.

"A-h-h, colonel, but my heart was rent with sorrow when I heard of your capture!" exclaimed the landlord at Corinth as the colonel walked in on him.

"Well, I dunno," was the reply. "You've got to get up pretty early to beat a Yankee and an eight day clock combined."

Accommodating Landlord.

A correspondent assures us that he never knew that it was possible for an innkeeper to be too accommodating to his guests until he went down to Noya Scotia and put up at a pleasant little hotel in the country. The landlord of this hotel hid it down as one of his principles of action to give people a little more than they asked for—to be "extra accommodating," as he termed it.

The landlord brilliantly illustrated his adherence to this principle the very morning after our correspondent's arrival at the hotel. The guest had to go away on the 7 o'clock train that morning and asked the proprietor to call him at 6. The guest went to sleep in the calm assurance that he should be aroused at the proper hour.

He seemed hardly to have fallen into a sound sleep when he heard a terrific pounding at his door. He sprang up wide awake.

"What's the matter?" he called out.

"Four o'clock! Four o'clock!" came the landlord's voice from the other side of the door. "Two hours more to sleep!"

It is needless to say that the guest slept no more that morning. The landlord's anxiety to be "extra accommodating" failed of its mark that time.

Where Gloves Are Grown.

The raising of kids for their skins is a leading industry among the French mountaineers, who obtain no small part of their subsistence from this source. Softness, delicacy of texture and freedom from blemish are principal factors in the value of kid skins, and to secure these essentials great pains are taken. As soon as the young animal begins to eat grass the value of the skin declines, for with a grass diet its skin immediately begins to grow coarser and harder in texture, and its chief merit vanishes. It is, therefore, kept closely penned, not only to prevent it from eating grass, but also to secure its skin from accidental injury from scratches or bruises, which impair its value. When the kids have reached a certain age at which the skins are in the best condition for the use of the glove they are killed, and the hides are sold to traveling hawkers, through whom they reach the great centers of the tanning industry at Annouay, Millau, Paris and Grenoble.

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## HINDOOS AT TABLE.

The Higher Their Caste the More  
Irksome Become the Rules.

"In India," writes Sidney Low, "religion, with what seems a malign ingenuity, has occupied itself in heaping complications round the two essential functions of eating and marrying. The Hindoo cannot take his food without elaborate precautions against pollution, and the higher his caste is the more burdensome these rules are. There are some inferior castes in the south who are not supposed to approach even within speaking distance of the elect. A regular table has been drawn up of what may be called the degrees of pollution, so that, while some of these low persons can pollute a man of a higher caste only by actually touching him, it is held that blacksmiths, masons, carpenters and leather workers can pollute at a distance of twenty-four feet, toddy drawers at thirty-six feet and cultivators at forty-eight feet, while the pariahs, who eat beef, have a pollution range of no less than twenty-one yards and twelve inches."

"The more sacred a Hindoo is the more he is worried by his code of table etiquette. The very high caste Brahman ought to strip off all his clothes and, if possible, sit on the floor when he consumes his food. He should not eat anything which has been touched by an inferior or a non-Hindoo or drink water out of any vessel similarly defiled. As the scale descends the restrictions relax until at last we get down to the man of no standing whatever, the sweeper, who is so wanting in refinement that he can openly stroke a puppy dog, and finally we reach the outcast who can eat any kind of meat whenever he can get it and will even drink out of a cup which has touched other lips."

"Luckily for the modern Hindoo these burdensome prohibitions and injunctions are subject to certain convenient legal fictions. Sweetmeats, it appears, are not food and may be taken by anybody anywhere. Not long ago the Brahman pundits at Benares decided that soda water is not water within the meaning of the act, so to speak, and that ice does not count."

POINTS OF ETIQUETTE.  
Finger bowls are not put on the table until after the dessert is removed. It is the worst possible form for a man to take a woman's arm, by day or night.

When leaving a car a man should precede the woman, so as to assist her if necessary.

In addressing a newly married couple at a wedding reception it is usual to congratulate the groom and to wish the bride great happiness.

It is not looked upon as good form to announce a meal by the ringing of a bell. That custom does very well for a railroad station, but is now seldom used in private houses.

When taking a lady in to dinner or at any indoor entertainment a man offers his left arm, but in the street he must always take the outside, no matter which arm he has to offer.

The expenses incident to a wedding are, with few exceptions, borne by the family of the bride. The groom's expenses, with the exception of flowers and souvenirs for the bridesmaids and ushers, begin with the fee to the clergyman.

Servants in Germany.

A girl engaged in America is by no means a girl secured, as regards either domestic service or matrimony. In Germany, on the other hand, the mistress of a prospective bride may feel reasonably secure when once an understanding has been reached.

"Well, I will engage you, Hedwig," says the hausfrau at the close of the interview, and as a pledge of good faith three marks (75 cents) are given and received. By acceptance of this sum, Hedwig binds herself to appear at the time and place agreed upon, and if she fails in fulfillment of the contract, after allowing twenty-four hours to elapse without having returned the money, she renders herself liable to criminal prosecution. Needless to say, breach of contract under such conditions is rare.—Harper's Bazar.

Postage Stamp Tongue.

"A number of ailments, some of them extremely dangerous, are comprised under the general head of postage stamp tongue," said a physician. "Postage stamp tongue, in a word, is any disorder contracted from the licking of postage stamps. Three or four persons a week visit me with postage stamp tongues. They have a throat trouble or a skin disease or a pulmonary complaint brought on by the reckless habit of stamp licking."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

A Fatal Fault.

"I have here some jokes," "You what?" asked the editor. "I said I have here some jokes." "Oh, you have there some jokes. What kind of jokes are they?" "New, brand new. Never been used before." "Can't use 'em," said the editor. "It takes our readers too long to get used to the new ones. Good day."—Milwaukee Sentinel.

Comparative Happiness.

If one only wished to be happy this could be easily accomplished, but we wish to be happier than other people, and this is always difficult, for we believe others to be happier than they are.—Montesquieu.

In France there is an idea that if a fisherman counts the fish he has caught he will catch no more during that day.

The idle rumor is always busier than any other kind.—Houston Post.

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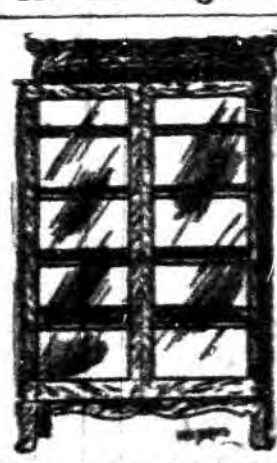

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